

*Claim 1*  
*Def. 1*  
*und*  
a gate electrode stack disposed on the gate dielectric film, wherein the stack includes a plurality of layers, each of said plurality of layers including a lateral surface to form a continuously vertical sidewall; and

a nitride spacer in contact with and extending along the continuously vertical sidewall of the gate electrode stack other than along lowermost portions of the sidewall.

---